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The Czar's Peace Manifesto supported by a great meeting in Exeter Hall, London.

A great meeting to support the Czar's Rescript in favor of a reduction of armaments was held in Exeter Hall, London, at the end of October. Though considerable time has elapsed the readers of the *ADVOCATE OF PEACE* will be interested in some account of the meeting, taken from the London *Daily News*:

The Bishop of London presided, and was supported by the Bishop of Hereford, Dr. Guinness Rogers, Rev. B. F. Meyer, Rev. J. P. Gledstone and many others.

Letters of regret at inability to attend, but expressing hearty sympathy with the purpose of the meeting, were read, from the Lord Mayor of London, Mr. John Morley, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Canon Scott-Holland, Canon Wilberforce, Dr. Parker, Dr. Horton, Dr. Clifford and many others.

The Bishop of London on taking the chair, said:

"We are met to express sympathy with a proposal which will in the future be regarded as one of the most valuable contributions to human welfare made in this generation. An enormous stride has been taken in the great work of the promotion of peace by the proposals of the Emperor of Russia. All honor to him for making them! Whatever success they may meet at present they will stand forever on record as the aspirations of a generous and high-minded ruler. The question of European disarmament can never again be dismissed with a sneer as chimerical. It has been recognized by one who has exceptional means of judging, as a possible object of practical endeavor. From this position it will never recede. It will stand always as an object which Europe as a whole is bound to pursue. Consider what a proposal of disarmament implies, what the idea is on which it rests! The existence of huge military establishments and the prominence necessarily given to them in ordinary life creates in the popular mind the inevitable conception that the world is regulated by force only. In their internal affairs Englishmen have been foremost in striving to assert that the world ought to be regulated by justice. The Russian Emperor pleads that a better chance shall be given for applying this same principle to international affairs also. At present the appearance of Europe suggests that everything depends on force. The Czar asks Europe to consider whether the reduction of armaments may not be made, at all events, to such a degree as will put the idea of justice in the first place and leave the appeal to force as secondary. There is nothing visionary in that. It is an object which surely all Englishmen may unite in supporting with enthusiasm, for it embodies a principle which lies at the very foundation of our national life and forms the base of our national greatness. But if we want peace we must remember that, like other good things, it cannot come to us from the top; it has to be won by our own efforts, beginning at the bottom. The first step towards universal peace is that everyone should try to acquire a pacific temper. I sometimes wonder whether Englishmen are as successful in impressing on other countries their possession of that pacific disposition on which they pride themselves. There is a danger of our thinking that our character as good-hearted and well-intentioned fellows is so obvious to everybody that we need not pay much attention to the way in which we

express ourselves. We forget sometimes that the news travels very fast in these days, that when it first arrives it is not always quite accurate, that opinions are nevertheless formed upon it, and that these opinions spread in a day throughout the civilized world. I am not finding fault with those whose business it is to be the mouthpieces of public opinion. They interpret it with exceeding faithfulness, but I wish to plead with all men that true wisdom lies in stating opinions in moderate language with due reservation, and strict attention to courtesy. Let less powerful nations reject this rule if they wish. We are strong enough and great enough to show them a more excellent way. We are too old established a firm to be perpetually greedy of small gains. We need not be always anxious to carry fresh acquisitions to our imperial account. We can afford to trust to the inherent capacity of the British race always to hold a foremost place in the business of the world, whatever that business may be. We are in a position to set an example by cultivating a little more sympathy with other peoples than we sometimes express, and a little more generosity in our criticism of their undoubted errors and their obvious deficiencies in wisdom as compared with ourselves. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am speaking quite generally, not with special reference to that particular misunderstanding with France which at present is uppermost in men's minds. That question had not arisen when this meeting was first summoned. I will only say that the people of this country will think no time wasted that is spent in an attempt to settle the question by words rather than deeds. The methods of diplomacy seem slow to impetuous minds, but any method must be slow which aims at reaching wisdom and doing justice. Excited feelings must be allowed to cool before there is room for the exercise of right judgment. We, in this hall, are met as Christians to bear testimony to the truth that peace on earth is the first promise of the Christian message. We cannot turn our backs on anything which aims at setting that divine purpose in the forefront of human endeavor. In expressing our opinion on the Czar's message we will do so with nothing in our hearts but goodwill towards all men, desiring only the blessing of the peacemakers—that we may be called the children of God.

Dr. Guinness Rogers said:

"I cannot understand any Christian man reading the Czar's Rescript without thanking God that he is living in an age when a powerful monarch like the Emperor of Russia dares to put forward a mere piece of idealism—for I do not regard it as being more than that for the present. Ideals have to be looked at for a long time before they are translated into facts. There may be disappointment after disappointment; it may be years before we see the beginning of the good work which the Czar's Rescript outlines. But however distant the time, all honor to the great Emperor—who has faced the opposition of his own class, and possibly of his own Ministers, and has put before the world an ideal which is worthy of a Christian monarch. There are those who would have us doubt the Czar's sincerity. Who gave them the authority to be their brother's judges? What reason have they for pronouncing such a verdict? I do not see why the Emperor should have taken this step if he did not mean it, for there are some considerations which seem to be opposed to it. He is not following in

the beaten track of his predecessors, but is taking an original and independent line, certain to provoke severe criticism; and men will ask whether such a step is likely, from the centre of a great military system which is continually making aggressions, and whose diplomacy has been so peculiar in China. But the Czar must have anticipated these objections, and yet he has made his proposal. The question is how are we going to receive it? I believe the English people are essentially a peace-loving people—though I agree that there are sometimes appearances that seem to indicate the contrary. There is no large party in this country which believes in the policy of war. Then, if we desire peace, here is one whom we have been accustomed to regard as a great war-lord and our enemy, and he says, "Let us see whether we cannot stop this ruinous competition." It is our manifest duty to hail the proposal, and to take care that if any efforts of ours can secure that object it shall be carried to a triumphant issue.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer said: "I wish to express my pleasure that the meeting includes representatives of the Society of Friends, to whom belongs much of the credit for dissemination of the ideas through which the Czar's great proposal has come. The sentiment of Simeon must be in their hearts to-night, for they must think themselves about to depart in peace, having seen the consummation of much earnest work. Christian men must give the Czar credit for the highest motives. We remember that in 1860 his grandfather carried out a mighty reform by emancipating the serfs, that in the last few weeks the present Czar has thrown his mighty influence into the scale of righteousness, helping us to turn the Turk, bag and baggage, out of Crete. His Imperial consort has been reared in one of the purest Courts of Europe, and has been steeped in the influences which have moulded our own Royal family. For these reasons Christians refuse to interpret his action as the result of sinister or selfish motives. It has been said that the manhood of Europe will suffer if the war spirit is extinguished. I do not believe it. As long as great tracts of territory need opening, as long as savage races require reducing to order by civilized Christian men, as long as it is possible to perform such exploits as those of Major Marchand, who has wrought magnificently in making his way with only a handful of men through vast and difficult solitudes and as long as we believe that men are made by great thoughts and ideals, we dare not sneer at the Czar's rescript, or demand the continuance of war. We are not dreamers. We believe that the Emperor's proposal is within the range of practical politics. The loss of national honor would be more disastrous than war, but refusal to follow the beacon light of a great proposal like the Czar's would be still more disastrous. Therefore the Church of Christ will close her ranks in its favor. Free Churchmen—though I and many others present are—will be glad to follow in this cause the lead of men like the Chairman. We call upon all clergymen, pastors and teachers to spread so strong an opinion on the subject that war shall follow slavery and be seen no more.

The Bishop of Hereford said:

"Like all Englishmen I welcome this utterance of the Czar as a noble and much needed reminder. It reminds us that in the community of nations, as of individuals, we are called upon to act as Christian men, not as Ish-

maelites—as feeling that we are really brethren, and not meant to prey on one another. On that ground I thank the Czar, who is following the best and noblest traditions of his own family. We remember the emancipation of the serfs, and the emancipation of Bulgaria from the Turks, and now the Czar has added another jewel to his crown, which we trust and believe will shine forever. How is this utterance being received. In too many quarters it has been received with cynical criticism; in the country at large it has been received with much interest and general sympathy, but with no great amount of enthusiasm. It is inevitable that in some quarters low motives should be imputed, because a good deal of diplomatic and political life is so steeped in cynicism that nothing but a cynical judgment is to be expected. But the cynic is nearly always in the wrong when he imputes motives. More than half of the miseries and mistakes of life arise from feelings of suspicion and distrust, and the imputation of mean motives. Therefore we should judge of motives, as we would like our own motives to be judged. Let us trust whenever we are able to trust. We will therefore welcome the Czar's utterance as that of a sincere Christian man, as honest as we ourselves claim to be. But there is no great amount of positive enthusiasm. All agree with the Czar's message; there is no opposition; but many of us are not sanguine as to great results. It is natural that there should be such a frame of mind, though it is to be regretted, because, if this noble conception is to be carried out, who are to be the instruments? It will have to be carried out by the concert of Europe, and if there is one thing about which it is difficult to entertain positive enthusiasm, it is the so-called concert of Europe. But for all that—nay, all the more—we ought to honor the Czar for the action he has taken. We are here not merely to carry a resolution, but in the hope that this meeting will be followed by many such meetings throughout the length and breadth of the country to strengthen our rulers in supporting the movement begun by the Czar. We hope that before long the conference may meet, and that our best statesmen may be there. I should like nothing better than to see Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery sitting side by side at that Round Table, and speaking there in support of the Emperor of Russia with all the weight of the British Empire. In the meantime it behooves the British people to show that they are in earnest, and I hope they may be able to give something like an object lesson in support of the motion by drawing ever more and more in close relationship with our cousins in the United States of America and that that relationship may be placed on a basis never to be disturbed—on a treaty of arbitration for the settlement of differences, if any should unhappily arise. Such a movement would do more than anything else to help forward the movement of the Czar.

Rev. J. P. Gledstone said: "I have many times heard expressions of surprise that a proposal for the reduction of armaments should come from the Czar. Perhaps we have not sufficiently reflected that God's children are not all Anglo-Saxons. Even the leaders of the world's thought are not exclusively of that race. In Russia, for example, there is a leader of thought named Tolstoi, who has taught us some things which it is well we should know. Again, we talk about establishing a per-

manent system of international arbitration, but while we talk about it Italy and the Argentine Republic put it into practice. At the present moment we have cause to regret exceedingly that while one Court after another has sent messages to the Czar intimating that his invitation to a conference is accepted, England has not yet done so. I trust that the omission will soon be repaired. That true Englishwoman, the Princess Alice, once said that she longed to be loved for her own sake. If there is one man in the world who has that great honor and blessing it is the Czar. There is no more beautiful picture than that of the Emperor of Russia coming forth from the sanctity of his peaceful and happy home to try and make all homes equally happy and peaceful. John Bright used to say that Free Trade had brought happiness and comfort to thousands of working people. If, however, the Czar succeeds in his enterprise he will spread those blessings to an even greater extent. The Christian Churches are moving and will move in this cause. One of the best things that Christian people in London could do would be to assemble in St. Paul's Cathedral, there to join in united prayer for that blessing of God which alone can give success to the Czar's great work. If the Bishop of London will call such a meeting, which I as an old-fashioned Nonconformist would call a prayer meeting, it will be easy to arrange a service. All Christians believe in the Bible, and from that book the Bishop might frame prayers in which all would be delighted to join.

The Rev. J. Scott Lidgett said: "I am glad to express the absolute unanimity with which throughout the world the great Methodist bodies have welcomed the proposal of the Czar. Perhaps the greatest danger to the peace of the Christian nations arises not so much in the council chambers of kings as from the ill-regulated enthusiasm and short-sighted utterances of crowds and of the people at large. The great armaments, as Lord Rosebery has said, inspire awe, but it is possible for us to be proud of our achievements on battlefields and to talk of our armaments until we come to suppose that, if not an absolute good in themselves, they are at least a very modified evil. The higher life of the nation will be injured by the growth of the military spirit. What a change has come over Germany, from the philosophers and poets and lovers of liberty of a century ago to the drill-sergeant of to-day, and what a terrible price the great Republic of France has paid in order to bring her army from its state of disorganization to its present condition of military efficiency. It is the pressure of great armaments and the fear of bringing them into action which has paralyzed the concert of Europe. I trust the conference will be held, and that a reduction of armaments will be brought about."

The following resolutions were carried unanimously and with much applause.

"This meeting of the Christian Churches of the metropolis welcomes with unfeigned joy and thankfulness the proposal of his Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, to hold an International Conference to consider the limitation of international armaments, to seek means of warding off the calamities which, in consequence of their steady development, are threatening the whole world, and to adopt measures for the maintenance of general peace. It assures his Imperial Majesty of its warm and profound sympathy with his proposal, and expresses the hope that,

notwithstanding the difficulties and discouragements which may have to be encountered, he will persevere in his beneficent object until some practical and permanent result has been achieved. And it respectfully but earnestly urges the British Government to give its cordial co-operation to the Emperor, by doing all in its power to facilitate the holding of the proposed Conference and to further its success, thus helping a proposal which, in its opinion, embodies the soundest policy of national welfare, and is calculated to promote the highest civilization of mankind.

"This meeting, composed of the servants and subjects of the Prince of Peace, reverently recognizes, in the proposal of the Russian Emperor, the guidance of Him who controls the hearts of kings and all who are in authority. It earnestly expresses the hope that all the Christian Churches in the land will do their utmost to secure recognition of the noble sentiments so opportunely expressed by the Emperor, and to promote the co-operation of the British people in the proposed Conference; and it desires the prayers of all Christian people, that God may bless the course proposed, preside over the deliberations of the Conference, and order its decisions for the welfare of the nations in accordance with His Divine wisdom."

The Czar's Peace Manifesto.

A Russian National Point of View.

In our article last month on the Czar's Peace manifesto, we joined the many enthusiastic voices in its favor, and "Gave the Czar what is the Czar's." As there are always two sides to every question and two standpoints upon which to take up our position, we must now give "Russia what is Russia's," and consider the weak and unsatisfactory aspects of the step made by the Russian Autocrat.

The "Daily News," of October 15th, publishes the first account by Mr. W. T. Stead of his mission to the capitals of Europe with regard to the Czar's peace proposal. Says the writer: "From Brussels to Paris, from Paris to Berlin, my pilgrimage of peace had been but a dolorous way, growing ever darker and more dark, until it seemed as if there was no hope." In St. Petersburg, however, he found "a glad confident morning again." This, in common language, means that in the constitutional and democratic countries of Western Europe the Czar's Manifesto was looked upon with distrust and coldness, but that the officials of Holy Orthodox and Autocratic Russia speak with confidence of their master's Ukaze to foreign Powers. As Mr. Stead feels a sacred awe before Russian Autocracy, and cares less for the other opinions he gathered, he feels happy and says: "I have now satisfied myself, and have absolute confidence in proclaiming aloud on the housetop that all the gloomy and disheartening suggestions of sceptical pessimists are without foundation. In this proposal for the meeting of a Conference of the nations on the subject of disarmament, there is no humbug, there is no nonsense. The Czar means business. That it is a certainty no one of the few but influential persons who are in the confidence of the Czar has any doubt at all." We are then told that the writer met and conversed with Mr. Witte, the Russian Minister of Finance, and with Count Lamsdorff, of the Russian Foreign Office. The two Ministers, like two